

ATEL Committee Meeting
Public Utilities Commission
September 13, 2012
9:00 AM

Attendees:

Denise Corson, James Litvack,, Courtenay Petracca, Ellen Lenox Smith , Jim Lanni, Charles Brown, Melissa Rosenberg, Harry Mancoll, Mathew Provost, Joe Pereira and Jeanne Panarace.

- 1. Introductions were made to former ATEL Member Jeanne Panarace.**
- 2. Minutes were reviewed and accepted.**
- 3. Committee Update – The ATEL committee has only one vacancy with is a representative from the Senate. Denise researched the current senators and thought that Senator Frank Maher, Senior Deputy Minority Leader would be a good fit to the committee. James Litvack sent him an email to see if he might be interested, but requested we contact him again in January after the elections. He responded the following: “I am in the middle of a campaign for re-election with a primary race and a general as well. Should I be successful in my re-election bid, I may consider your suggestion. I have served two terms in the Senate with being a member on the HHS committee both terms. Committee appointments are made new after each election so I may not be a member of that committee come the start if a new Legislative session. Please contact me again in January**

to discuss this possibility and my availability. Thank you again.”

4. Freedom Alert/Legislative Review of Device- the committee reviewed the Title 39-section 39-1-42 regarding whether the Freedom Alert is an appropriate device for the ATEL Program; the section states “ The adaptive telephone equipment loan program capable of servicing the needs of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, severely speech impaired, or those with neuromuscular impairments for use with a single party telephone line, to any subscriber who is certified as deaf, hard of hearing, severely speech impaired, or with neuromuscular impairments by a licensed physician, audiologist, speech pathologist, or a qualified state agency, pursuant to chapter 23 of this title.”

Denise informed the committee that we have been providing emergency devices, at least for 18 years (since Pam Kling has been with the program for this period of time); therefore, we have to some extent made precedence for offering this type of Device. Jeanne Panarace, who has been with the committee since the beginning, believed this device to be an appropriate product for the ATEL Program. The committee also thought the device appropriate since it was capable of servicing the needs of persons who are deaf, hard of hearing, severely speech impaired, or those with neuromuscular impairments.

Another question that the committee discussed, is whether we should

allow clients to receive 2 devices, if one of there needs is an emergency device. Denise mentioned that many homes she goes into are very low income and are paying \$30-\$40 per month out of their pocket for lifeline services, but they also can not communicate over the phone and they also need an adaptive telephone. Therefore, the client has to make a choice between 2 different needs. Some suggestions were - the committee discussed that they could give 2 devices on a case by case basis; Denise mentioned she would see if they could get it from another source first, possibly OSCIL, or WBCAP to possibly pay for the second device. Currently, WBCAP will pay for 6 months of Lifeline Services for their clients and then they are on their own for payment from then on. A one time Freedom Alert purchase, costs about the same amount as 6 months of Lifeline, but at the end of 6 months the client would still have coverage. Another suggestion was that we allow clients to have two devices until they order one of the devices, and they give the new device to ATEL; however, this would mean a returned visit and tracking procedure for the second device and possible issue with the tracking of serial numbers from what are PO have and what our inventory shows.

Denise also mentioned that we will now be carrying two models of cordless phones, by the end of the month: Clarity XLC2, and XLC3.4 . These devices do not have the battery packs like the ones we used to carry, but rechargeable AA batteries.

5. New Application: Denise wanted to redo the application to reflect some of the new products and to get a better understanding of what the client is looking for, so that they get the device that best serves their needs. Some Suggestions was to not have home visits as a primary option, but only if they do not have someone to pick-up the devices; Denise stated that since we are not at an easily accessible location on Fountain St., that we don't give demonstrations with the devices, and therefore, we don't know if the individual is using the device properly; however, when home visits are provided not only do clients get a demonstration, but make sure the phone is properly set up. Many members felt that the application was too complicated, and needed to be simplified; some suggestions were to number the second page, remove all questions that weren't absolutely necessary, state on top of page to fill out to the best of your ability, and to include a return envelope with the application.

6. Open Discussion - Melissa spoke about the possibilities of having lock boxes outside people homes, so that when they call the police or fire they don't break the door down. People could buy these lock boxes, and then the Fire and/or Police Department would have the key/combo. Denise mentioned that there are a few towns in the East Bay area: Warren, Tiverton and Little Compton, that have programs that the Fire Department purchase emergency devices(via donations) and the residents purchase the lockboxes (